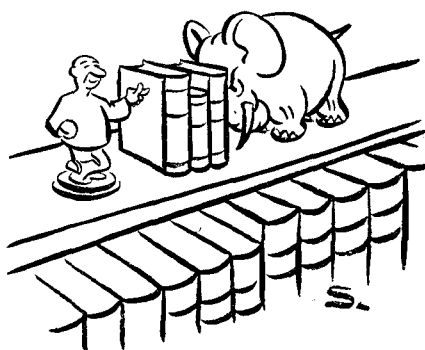


IT IS RUMORED that W. C. Fields, the great comedian, found cause to deplore the lack of an adequate bookstore near his California residence. He approached the leading intellectual of the community and gave him a high-powered sales talk on the advantages of opening such a store for the local trade. "\$30,000 will do it, my boy," said Fields with great conviction. "Surely you can raise such an insignificant sum at the drop of a hat." The young man allowed that it was a fine idea and that he would like nothing better than to open a well-stocked bookstore. "I think I can get my hands on about \$20,000," he told Fields. "As for that remaining \$10,000, how about your putting it up for me? You're a rich man and, besides, the whole idea is yours." "Under ordinary circumstances," Fields assured him, "nothing would give me greater pleasure, my boy. At the moment, however, I find myself in rather a strange predicament. All of my available funds are completely tied up in ready cash." . . .

TRADE WINDS salutes W. W. Norton and Company on its twentieth anniversary. This firm has published a higher percentage of really distinguished books than any of its contemporaries and has consistently adhered to its slogan, "Books That Live." Highlights on its carefully restricted back list include "An American Doctor's Odyssey," "Mathematics for the Million," "Burma Surgeon," and Elizabeth Drew's superb "The Enjoyment of Literature" and "Discovering Poetry." Norton's forthcoming "The Loom of Language," by Frederick Bodmer, edited by Lancelot Hogben, is likely to be its most important publication of all. It is a history of human speech: its origins, its growth, and its present use—a guide to foreign tongues and a method for learning them. . . . Besides serving as acting head of his firm, Warder Norton has been performing a prodigious task as chairman of the Council on Books in War-time. . . . Meanwhile, an old and honored name has disappeared from the publishing lists. Lippincott reports that the Frederick A. Stokes Company, of which it acquired the capital stock in 1941, has been liquidated, and that hereafter all books previously published by Stokes, and still worth reprinting, will be issued under the Lippincott imprint. . . . The most popular book of recent years that bore the colophon of Stokes was Percival Wrenn's "Beau Geste." . . .

BOOK REVIEWERS have been very skittish about mentioning the name of the actual model for John Hersey's "General Marvin" in "A Bell for Adano," although no reader can possibly doubt his identity. It's a fine book—one of the best I've read in many a moon. . . . Trade Winds also beats a drum for "Wingate's Raiders," a most unusual war book by Charles J. Rolo. Wingate is one of those Lawrence-like characters that the English army seems to uncover every time the need is most urgent. He led his personally-trained little "mob" out of Assam, through impenetrable jungles, to cut important Jap lines of communication in Burma, and to confound enemy forces a hundred times its size. When Mountbatten really gets around to retaking Burma, the jungle fighting tricks mastered by Wingate and his men may prove a decisive factor. . . . Leland Stowe thinks the job should have been tackled before now, that the old British reluctance to employ Indian and Chinese troops has caused the unpardonable delay. The monsoon season begins in a month or so, and no major campaign can be mounted in those parts again for many months. The retaking of Burma will reopen the vital supply route to Chungking. . . . Wingate himself has taken advantage of the respite to return to the Himalayan district in which he was born. His key men have gone with him, to indulge his theory that men can store up energy as a camel stores up fat by long days of complete relaxation, and trance-like immobility. . . . One other war book that struck me as the next best thing to being on the scene myself was "The Curtain Rises." Because I happen to publish Quent Reynolds, I see no reason for not saying that I get a particular kick out of his breezy and exhilarating reportage. . . .

THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS reports a scientific experiment which



may be of marginal interest to students of English literature. Until recently it was an old English custom to preserve as keepsakes the currant buns baked for the Cakes and Ale celebrations held at times of national rejoicing. Two such buns, one baked in 1863 at the time of the wedding of the then Prince of Wales, and the other in 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria's jubilee, were subjected last month to a chemical analysis. Alas! "They turned out to be low in thiamines but extremely high in riboflavin." I will not be able to measure the scope of this national disaster until I find out what thiamine and riboflavin are. "The Concise Oxford Dictionary" gave me no help whatever. . . . Will Ransom has uncovered an English catalogue that lists Chic Sales's "The Specialist" (do you recall that abomination?) under "Art and Architecture." . . . Ephraim Tutt, Arthur Train's contribution to legal fiction, is headed for Broadway. Mr. Train is doing the dramatization himself, and Raymond Massey will essay the role of Mr. Tutt. . . . Jan Valtin, author of "Out of the Night," is now a private in the Signal Corps. Charlie Pearce, of Duell, Sloane and Pearce, is also off to the wars. . . . "Red" Lewis is looking for a story about an author of a Great American Novel who longs to be a newspaper reporter, or the owner of a chicken farm in Maine who wants to be a vaudevillian. . . . John Kieran is now referred to as the man who reminds elephants. . . .

THE TECHNICAL TERM for the transposition of letters or sounds in a word, or series of words, is metathesis, but the more familiar designation is "Spoonerism." The Rev. W. A. Spooner, Warden of New College, Oxford, achieved this dubious claim to fame when he thundered, in the course of an oration, "Kinquering congs their titles take." Another time he caused a mild commotion in church by demanding "Is this pie occupewed?" There has been a recent epidemic of Spoonerisms at Radio Station WQXR, host to the "Books Are Bullets" program. Melville Elliot referred to "chakes and stops" instead of "steaks and chops"; Duncan Pirnie thought he was announcing "New Guinea jungles" but it came out over the air as "New Juinea Gungles"; Allen Ward topped them all with his incredible "Sloat Flulu" for "flute solo." . . . WQXR, whose programs are consistently high grade, has been purchased by *The New York Times*, but will continue under the expert guidance of John Hogan and Elliott Sanger. . . . Speaking of radio, a literary program called "Author Meets the Critics" is attracting a growing audience, and is worthy of



"Honorable British Commander resembles character in Peter Arno cartoon."

your attention. It is heard every Wednesday at 8 P.M. over Station WHN. John McCaffery, formerly of Doubleday, now fiction editor of *The American Magazine*, has become a smooth, witty M.C. in the best Fadiman tradition. . . . Fadiman himself has taken on a new radio chore in addition to his "Information Please." The publishing industry hopes that he has not given up book reviewing for good. . . .

THIS IS A QUOTE from *The London Bookseller* on the subject of American blurbs:

One of the things American publishers do better on the whole than ours is the writing of "blurbs." Every time we read the advertisement pages of the *Publishers' Weekly* or *The Saturday Review* we yearn to lay hands on some book or other described with such spontaneous and infectious enthusiasm that we cannot bear to be without it, only to find in not a few cases, that the book has already been published in this country and advertised by its English publishers as "A novel of great distinction (charm, vigor, beauty, delicacy), that will please (delight, more than satisfy) So-and-So's many (countless, innumerable thousands of) readers (admirers)."

Better, of course, this sort of formula, which is completely unexceptionable though not greatly appetizing than the preposterous overwriting which so frequently made publishers' advertising ridiculous before the war, when advertising space and publishers' claims were both exaggerated. Even in these days of enforced brevity, however, book announcements might be rather less

deadly boring than they usually are. A pleasing exception to the common form is to be found in Heinemann's announcement of Margery Allingham's new detective story, "Coroner's Pidgin":

"Mr. Albert Campion, who has been in this country on a mission for the Government so secret that, as he prefers to say, he never found out quite what it was, returned to London to find uncensored adventure awaiting him. Within an hour of his arrival, as he lay peacefully in the first hot bath of home, the body came slowly up the stairs. . . ."

TWO OLD FRIENDS who had not seen each other in twenty years rediscovered one another in the Marshall Field Book Department the other day. "Great to see you, Joe," boomed one of them. "I suppose you are a married man with children by this time." "No," said the other, "I am afraid I never took the plunge." "Joe, you must be crazy," said the first one. "I guess you just don't realize what it means to be married. Take me, for instance. I come home every night from a hard day at the office to a beautiful, warm, comfortable apartment. My wife is waiting to hand me my slippers and the evening paper. Then she runs out to the kitchen, cooks me a luscious dinner. She tops that with my favorite liqueur, plants me in my easy chair by the fire and hands me my pipe. Then she washes the dishes. Finally, she comes and snuggles down by my side and starts to talk. She talks, and talks, and talks, and talks. *I wish she'd drop dead.*"

BENNETT CERF.

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THE CRIME CLUB

MARCH 11, 1944

17

The Rump of the Bear

THE SOVIET FAR EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA. By William Mandel. I.P.R. Inquiry Series. New York: The Dial Press. 1944. 151 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by EMIL LENGYEL

THE Soviet Far East is a huge land bordering on Japanese-held territory and the Pacific. William Mandel compares it to Canada and Alaska from Lake Superior to the Pacific Ocean, insofar as its size is concerned. The Yakut Republic itself—part of this territory—is as large as all of European Russia.

Most important region of the Soviet Far East is the Maritime Territory with the city of Vladivostok on its southern tip. On the map this region looks like a finger thrust into the intestines of the Japanese empire. It was bases there that attracted the envious attention of the world-traveling United States Senators, some of whom told the country that the Soviets should place those bases at our disposal.

This is a rich country and would be much richer if more man-power could be had. Oil is one of its most important raw materials in this mechanized world and large quantities of it are found in the northern part of Sakhalin Island. The author points

out that the Soviet Far East produces more than its quota of coal, pig iron, and cement. It exports large quantities of lumber, fish, and fur to the Western Soviet Union. "The known natural riches of the Far East sound like a list of chemical elements." In agricultural products it became self-sufficient a couple of years ago, and is now expected to provide an exportable surplus.

This vast territory is sparsely settled, most of its white inhabitants living along the Trans-Siberian Railroad and great river banks. The January average temperature of the city of Khabarovsk is six below zero Fahrenheit, while that of Verkhoyansk, in Yakutia, it is—58 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Soviet Far East is the land of one railway, the author shows. That railway is the Trans-Siberian. The much talked about and little-known Baikal-Amur Railway has not yet been completed, in the author's view. Rivers afford water transportation when open to navigation, which may not be more than an average of six months a year.

Obviously, Mr. Mandel made an effort to assemble most of the material available about the natural resources, economic and cultural development, population and land settlement, transportation and administrative divisions of the Soviet Far East. The available material is not rich, which may be judged by the fact that all of it is presented on not more than 85 pages, several of which are reprints of Soviet daily press articles, containing so few points of interest that they could have easily been presented in condensed form. Just the same, the material pro-

vided by Mr. Mandel will prove useful to Far East specialists.

Readers may be interested in Mr. Mandel's treatment of the importance of this region for the outcome of the war with Japan. The Soviets are at peace with the Mikado's empire, since, as the author points out, first they had to stave off Hitler's aggression. The Far East was turned into an arsenal for the forces fighting in the West.

In his interpretation of the Soviet policy in the Far East Mr. Mandel does not seem to be consistent. He writes in his Preface that the Far East's economic expansion was "determined by Soviet estimates of potentialities inherent in the position of the USSR as members of opposition coalitions." On the other hand, he writes in a later chapter: "Any attempt to read into the regionalization of the economy of the Far East now proceeding, any special design arising out of the proximity of Japanese forces would not be borne out by the facts." Not only is this statement not consistent with the previous one, but it is hard to accept it in view of the constant state of preparedness characterizing life in Far East border districts.

Some thirty pages of this small book are devoted to a discussion of the vast Soviet Central Asiatic republics. The author himself warns the reader that these chapters contain no rounded treatment. The title page of his book reads: "The Soviet Far East and Central Asia," while the other titles, on the jacket and elsewhere, simply call it: "The Soviet Far East." Had more material been available about the more eastern region, it would have been preferable for the author not to roam so far afield.

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* SECOND LINES OF FAMOUS POEMS

Listed below are the second lines of twenty famous poems by as many well-known poets. Can you identify each poem and its author? Allowing 7 points for each correct answer, a score of 63 is par, 70 is very good, 84 or better is excellent. You'll find the answers on page 23.

1. And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by.
2. And he stoppeth one of three.
3. And his cohorts were gleaming with purple and gold.
4. Bird thou never wert.
5. By the Nine Gods he swore.
6. Dig the grave and let me lie.
7. I gallop'd, Dirck gallop'd, we gallop'd all three.
8. I never hope to see one.
9. Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
10. Old Kaspar's work was done.
11. Old Time is still a-flying.
12. One end is moo, the other milk.
13. Tell her that she wastes her time and me.
14. The kid that handles the music box was hitting a jag-time tune.
15. The leaves they were crisped and sere.